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Translated by [ ]  
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Kostantinos GERTSOS AND THE BUSINESS (Financial and Commercial) HOUSE  
OF THE GERTSOS BROTHERS. THEIR ACTIVITY DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE  
YEARS (1935-1960). Brief Report.

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1. Konstantinos GERTSOS is from Kozani, Western Macedonia, and is now about 65 years old. He is the oldest son of a Kozani family which was insignificant and poor in the past and whose pure Greek origin is doubted but is considered to have originated from Slav ancestry, probably of Bulgarian origin. The paternal GERTSOS family included three brothers; the oldest was Konstantinos and second was Theodoros GERTSOS who today is about 60 years old. These two brothers were the most important of the GERTSOS clan who built up one of the most powerful business houses (financial and commercial) during the past 25 years in Greece, with an expansion of their activity over ten years ago abroad (Switzerland and West Germany). But the real founder and leader of this business house was and still is Konstantinos GERTSOS and Theodoros was mainly his assistant in all enterprises. The third brother, Athanasios, did not play any important role but was rather an employee in the businesses of the above-mentioned brothers.

2. Konstantinos GERTSOS is reported to have a permanent residence at Psychiko, Athens (Antheon and Chrysanthemon Streets) but he rarely comes to Athens; he lives permanently with his brother Theodoros at Zurich, Switzerland. In the following pages we will deal mainly with Konstantinos GERTSOS, leader of this house, and with all his economic activity from 1935 and on; naturally his brother Theodoros played a big role in this activity.

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3. Konstantinos GERTSOS begins to make his appearance somehow in the economic life of the country mainly from 1936, having moved to Athens permanently from 1935. It is not adequately known with what capital he started his business and where he got the money but it is considered a fact that in the past those years were difficult for the GERTSOS brothers. But, as it is known, the late Ioannis METAXAS ruled Greece from August 1936 with a dictatorship government. METAXAS - as one of his first steps - ordered the reorganization of the Greek army and its supply of modern and sufficient war material because his predecessor Greek governments had left the army warehouses almost bare, having neglected the equipment of the army almost entirely, because they had been over-confident that the then existing and now dead League of Nations was going to give security to the small nations. METAXAS worked actively for the completion of the equipment of the Greek army and he had decided to purchase the major portion of supplies and war material from HITLER'S Germany, which was then rearming herself violently, because he had the opportunity to pay the German providers with farm produces in exchange for the equipment and supplies (mainly tobacco, cotton, etc.), through the Greek-German clearing functioning then.

4. GERTSOS at that time benefited greatly from this opportunity to reequip the army. Since 1936 GERTSOS had appeared as a representative first of small German industries who manufactured goods which were slated strictly for commercial use (such as dyes, electric goods, etc.). But in order to improve his financial pursuits he became close with officials of the METAXAS regime and with ranking officers, specialists and economists, who were serving then at headquarter offices of the technical services of the Army (Artillery branch,

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personnel office, general Army Staff, Inspection of Technical services and Materiel, etc.); these services were going to approve the purchases and in the end would have handled the delivery of the army materiel and supplies. It is not necessary for me to mention here today the names of some of these accomplices of GERTSOS in this entire business of equipping the army. But in any case, with the advice and prompting, but also with the actual assistance of a few of these proper officials of the regime then and of technical officers of the army, as said above, Konstantinos GERTSOS made the right moves and became practically the sole representative in Greece of the then large German factories making trucks, army tractors, mobile repair workshops, war engines of every kind, etc. In his capacity he took part in all the technical bids for the purchase of this materiel for the reorganization of the army during 1937-1940, he was scandalously favored by these purchase committees, naturally in exchange for economic favors (towards certain officials and members of the committees), and thus he managed to get the biggest portion of the then important orders of the Greek army for the factories which he represented. Thus GERTSOS then made the reputation as one of the biggest suppliers of army material, he stabilized his reputation in German industry as a powerful and important business representative in Greece, and he amassed a large fortune. In 1937-1940 he founded the firm for his further economic enterprises in Greece which included a permanent exhibit of the products of serious German factories represented by him and with various repair workshops in Athens and with branches and offices in Salonika.

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5. The war by the Axis forces against Greece followed and the seizure of the country by the Germans-Italians and Bulgarians. During the Occupation Konstantinos GERTSOS - now known to the Germans as one of their men - collaborated closely with the Germans of the Occupation in many economic and anti-national enterprises, such as black-market business of food, tying up and collecting large quantities of farm products and sending them to Germany, requisition of Greek private and state factories which were made to work for the needs of the German army and Occupation authorities, etc. As a result of GERTSOS' extended operations with the Germans as well as other traitor Greeks who also collaborated with the German-Italians on an economic level, the Greek economy was practically stripped entirely of any resources, the Greek people famished, and the wealth and assets of the banks quickly vanished, and the country and the people fell into extreme wretchedness. All the Greek traitors who had collaborated on an economic level thus, among who were included the GERTSOS brothers, had believed in the ultimate victory of the Axis and consequently that they would not be punished for their treacherous activities. But when it became clear that the Axis was losing the war then they got ready to leave Greece and they disappeared mostly to Switzerland before the final retreat of the Germans from Greece. Konstantinos GERTSOS had made a great deal of money from his collaboration with the Germans, a large portion of which as well as a portion of his pre-war profits he had invested in Greece and

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especially in the area of the former Capital Administration in real-estate and installatkons of pre-war Greek enterprises. After the retreat by the Germans from Greece he settled in Switzerland. Later he went to Germany to settle his various economic matters and he went back to Switzerland about the end of 1948 where he settled permanently, mainly at Zurich.

6. After the liberation of Greece the machinery of punishment of all the Greek traitors who had collaborated with the enemy was set in motion, as it is known and pertinent records were formed against them after preliminary interrogations. And all of their properties located in Greece, of any nature, (real-estate, etc.), was confiscated by a constitutional act of Parliament at that time. The court of these quislings began functioning and it issued certain condemning decisions. The properties of all the collaborators were placed in sequestration, and compulsorily, by the Public Administration and it was provided that these properties would be turned over to their owners only in case of their complete and triumphant acquittal. The Quislings Court functioned from 1946-1947, but quite lazily and slow, and it became necessary to suspend its function because of the guerrilla war which broke out and plagued the country from 1946-1949, so that it has not functioned since then. GERTSOS' collaboration case did not come up on time to be tried but his property had been confiscated and he did not dare return to live in Greece permanently because there was the fear that he would be arrested and detained until his case was tried. Thus he lived abroad.

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7. But in spite of these things Konstantinos GERTSOS managed to take over, through his firm, the exploitation of the lignite mines of the area of Ptolemais by signing a contract through his representative with the Greek Public, with the Greek governments of the years 1947 and 1948 which were presided by SOFOULIS, and thanks to the strong support of his compatriot and friend, then Minister of National Economy, Georgios VARVOUTIS (also from Kozani and politician in the Name of Kozani). GERTSOS claimed that he had plenty of capital abroad but he did not present this as his own because of his collaboration. He disclosed this capital as coming from a group of Swiss and German backers and he appeared as their representative and general administrator of the company to develop the lignite mines of Ptolemais. But he did not manage to do anything of what he had undertaken to do in that lignite-bearing area by the contract, except that he opened up some shafts to dig for the metal, although the Public had repeatedly given him extensions of the power of the contract in order to carry it out. It should be understood that GERTSOS ran the Ptolemais projects more or less from Switzerland through his representative in Greece. The Public, finally convinced about GERTSOS' inability to enforce the Ptolemais contract, declared him in default of this in 1954 and turned over this business to another greedy swindler business man, BODOSAKIS ATHANASIADIS, who had been negotiating for a long time to get the German KRUPP firm to take part in the Ptolemais business. BODOSAKIS founded the company (LI-PTOL, that is, Fertilizer-Ptolemais) and finally, around 1959, taking his capital of 3 million dollars which he had first put into the business, he withdrew from the Ptolemais business which came into the hands of Greek DEH since 1959.

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8. Mashal PAPAGOS died in October 1955 and KARAMANLIS came to power and then a new happier period begins for GERTSOS. He manages to attract KARAMANLIS' attention, because both are Macedonians, he appears to be an admirer of KARAMANLIS, and he backs him up financially in the elections of 1956 and 1958. He becomes a bosom pal of KARAMANLIS, gives him free hospitality when he goes to Switzerland, builds a magnificent villa for KARAMANLIS at Montreux, Switzerland, and he also backs him up financially so that KARAMANLIS can take part in the cost of the construction, ab indiviso, of two large apartment buildings in Switzerland; I have report<sup>ed</sup> this to you in my previous information bulletins. Konstantinos GERTSOS spends a great deal of money for all his attention to KARAMANLIS. But in exchange for all these things KARAMANLIS, as prime minister now of Greece, took irregular action and gave back to GERTSOS his entire confiscated and sequestered property in Greece - as a result of his collaboration with the enemies during the Occupation. Then about four months ago when the bolt of the MERTEN affair is handing over KARAMANLIS' head, we see GERTSOS going back and forth between Switzerland and West Germany, trying to calm down MERTEN and to buy off his silence with money. And there are some serious indications that MERTEN did get a considerable sum of money from GERTSOS and that it why for a moment he shut up and stopped accusing KARAMANLIS, but this is not enough for MERTEN who is asking for much more money and that is why he is going back to his accusations. I have submitted pertinent reports to you about this latter.

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9. Since 1956 and on GERTSOS again appears with a great deal of financial means and capital. He takes part in powerful financial groups with Swiss and German capitalists; these groups have made important investments of capital in foreign countries and they are also interested in important investments in large productive projects in Greece. GERTSOS is financed with plentiful German capital and he is active around KARAMANLIS so that he can ensure privileged investments in Greece. He, too, is importantly mixed up in the effort to get privileged treatment of German capital in Greece but the Germans are asking for a lot of privileges and the KARAMANLIS government - undergoing a variety of other oppositions from Greek directions and various other blackmails from other international groups which are supported by their own foreign governments - is reluctant to commit itself entirely to the asphyxiating development of German capital, in which the GERTSOS house also takes part to a considerable degree. Furthermore GERTSOS also managed again to acquire the representations of big German and Swiss industries and whose products he has now been promoting even in Greece for about three years.

10. Thus, for about three years now GERTSOS, in the nature of a company in which various foreign shareholders (Germans and Swiss) actually take part to some degree but mostly figuratively largely, maintains a big economic-technical and commercial business in Athens and in Salonika under the name TANTEX (the letters mean: Foreign Technical Representations).

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11. This TANTEX company has the following businesses in Athens:

a. Permanent showroom and workrooms at 61 Iera Odos. Telephone numbers 521.372 - 521.431 and 522.947.

b. The offices of the company which represents the big foreign industries (BOSCH, ZEISS, M.A.N., GEIGY, etc., all German), at 6 Agiou Konstantinou Street, telephone 522315.

c. Products salesroom of the BOSCH and GEIGY industries at 22 Kapodistriou Street, telephone 616.723.

12. In Salonika this TANTEX company has a branch at 53 Megalou Alexandrou (tel.79.533) and a workroom at 15 Dodekanesou Street (tel.20.121).

13. Here, as follows, are the products of the above industries which TANTEX, that is, GERTSOS, is the agent of:

A. BOSCH INDUSTRY: All the spare parts and accessories for cars and oil-burning engines as well as for electric refrigerators, etc.

B. ZEISS INDUSTRY: All kinds of optical and photograph goods.

C. M.A.N. INDUSTRY: Cars and tractors.

D. GEIGY I.R.A.E. INDUSTRY: Dyes and chemical products in general.

14. TANTEX may also have other big representations of foreign industrial firms but for the moment these were the ones I discovered. They are very careful at the TANTEX offices about giving out pertinent information.

15. Everything in this present report gives, I think, a clear picture of the economic activity of Konst. GERTSOS who - in any case - lacks any trace of Greek patriotism and is dishonest and from many aspects a dangerous man and of corrupted conscience.

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16. Sources of Information: I got the information of the present report from the following sources:

a. From my personal opinion as to the prewar activities of GERTSOS and as to his adventures up to 1946 (paragraphs 1,2,3,4,5,6,).

b. From the Director of the Ministry of Industry, Dimitrios ASIMAKOS, as to his involvement in the Ptolemais business (paragraph 7) and (paragraphs 10, 11, 12) as to his present activity of TANTEX.

c. From Industrialist Dimitrios ANGELOPOULOS (General Director of Halyvdourgiki (Steel)) for paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 12,13, which he knows well because he is somewhat associated personally with GERTSOS. He also confirmed my personal impressions as above (section a).

d) From my previous information bulletins as repeated in paragraph 8.

e. I also got some general information from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Greece (T.VLAIKOS).